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Report of the Seminar on promoting independent and pluralistic Asian Media

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Message of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Boutros Boutros-Ghali

One of the first resolutions adopted unanimously by the United Nations General Assembly in 1946 called for freedom of information and expression. In the decades since then, the media too often became instruments in the hands of those in power rather than the independent guarantee of freedom they were meant to be.

But freedom would not be suppressed. We are grateful for the many people around the world who stood up for a free press. Their sacrifices were not in vain, for they opened doors through which we today can picture a new era of widespread freedom of expression.

The world has entered the Age of Information. The free flow of ideas increasingly transcends physical and geographical boundaries. Regardless of their political, cultural or economic circumstances, people everywhere are drawing inspiration from each other and asserting themselves in the concerns that directly touch their lives.

In this new era, economic success and political freedom both depend upon the free flow of thought. Only when people have access to facts, knowledge, information and opinion can they make the informed choices that the times demand.

This in turn calls for an independent and pluralistic media—protected by law, organized to uphold its independence and ethical standards, and able to enhance its human resources through training and professional development.

This Seminar is a significant contribution to fulfilling the vital role of the Asian media. Your deliberations will strengthen freedom of expression around the world. The lessons of this century are clear: neither human rights nor the dignity of the human person is secure without the free flow of information imparted through independent and pluralistic media.

I send you greetings and best wishes for every success in your efforts at Alma Ata.

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I Introduction

1. The Seminar on Promoting Independent and Pluralistic Asian Media, held in Alma Ata, Kazakhstan, from 5 to 9 October 1992, was organized jointly by the United Nations, through its Department of Public Information (UN-DPI), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), through its Communication Division and its Office of Public Information, and the Kazakh Organizing Committee under the Ministry for Press and Media, Republic of Kazakhstan. To guide the preparations and ensure a broad participation of professionals from the region, a Consultative Committee met a number of times at UNESCO headquarters in Paris and advised on operational details. This Committee was composed of representatives from: UN-DPI, UNESCO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Press Institute (IPI), the International Federation of Newspaper Publishers (FIEJ), the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), the World Press Freedom Committee (WPFC), the Thomson Foundation—UK, the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU), the Press Foundation of Asia (PFA), the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD), the Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre (AMIC), the Communication Assistance Foundation (CAF—Netherlands), the Rockefeller Foundation—USA, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES—Germany), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA).

2. This Seminar followed the Seminar on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press, held in Windhoek, Namibia, from 29 April to 3 May 1991. It was the first major undertaking in response to resolution 4.3 on promotion of press freedom in the world, approved by the General Conference of UNESCO at its 26th session in 1990. The resolution referred to the Windhoek Seminar as a catalyst in the process of encouraging press freedom, independence and pluralism in Africa, and invited the Director-General to extend to other regions of the world the action taken so far in Africa and Europe, and to promote the independence and pluralism of the media.

3. The Seminar also reflects the spirit of United Nations General Assembly resolution 45/76 A, "Information in service of humanity", adopted on 11 December 1990, and is in accord with the UNESCO communication strategy adopted by the General Conference at its 25th session in 1989.

4. At the invitation of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Seminar on Promoting Independent and Pluralistic Asian Media was held at the hall of the Supreme Soviet (the National Parliament) in Alma Ata, Kazakhstan, from 5 to 9 October 1992. Forty-seven participants from 25 countries and Hong Kong attended in their personal capacity. There were also 25 observers from media organizations; 12 representatives of non-governmental organizations; one representative of an intergovernmental organization; eight representatives of Member States of the United Nations and UNESCO; representatives of UNDP and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); and members of the Consultative Committee *(see Annex III, List of Participants and Observers)*.

5. In addition, there were some 100 observers invited by the Kazakh Organizing Committee from the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Opening of the Seminar

6. The Presiding Officer of the opening ceremony, a well-known Kazakh journalist and poet, Anuar Alimzanov, welcomed the participants, saying that the Seminar was prompted by the urgent need to establish the conditions for the fuller development of pluralist and independent mass media. Alimzanov linked the freedom of the press to the economic and social advancement of a democratic society. He stressed the importance of the Seminar for the formulation of recommendations to promote the development of the press and the electronic mass media, not only in Central Asia but also in Eastern Europe.

7. In welcoming participants, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Sergei Tereschenko, said that, although Kazakhstan had recently become independent, it had suffered many deprivations in its colonial past. Previously, issues concerning the economy, politics and human rights were under centralized control; consequently, the indigenous Kazakh culture had become ideologically biased and its development had been hindered. That had damaged the whole complex of the Kazakh spiritual and intellectual life, as well as the functioning of the press, keeping it from reporting the full spectrum of opinions, in-

terests and views. He informed the Seminar that last year the Kazakh Parliament had adopted a press law which guaranteed legal rights, including freedom of speech and the right to express opinions and establish private mass media to cater to the information needs of different political movements and social groups. He concluded by congratulating the United Nations and UNESCO for holding the Seminar in Alma Ata, affirming that it showed concrete support for the democratic changes taking place in the Republic.

8. The Prime Minister then read a brief, cordial welcome from the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbaev, who could not be present as he was attending the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York. The President declared that supporting a free, pluralistic press strengthens democracy and supports the economic and social progress of a State. The normal functioning of the mass media, and in fact their very existence, would be impossible without the guarantee of their independence. The President noted that the need to strengthen the print and electronic media, especially for new democracies, which was the focus of the Seminar, could not be overestimated.

9. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, in a message read by his representative, Under-Secretary-General Rafeeuddin Ahmed, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), referred to one of the very first resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly in 1946 calling for freedom of information and expression. Since then, he noted, the media have often become an instrument of power rather than an independent guarantor of freedom. The Secretary-General noted that innumerable individuals around the world stand up for a free press; he declared that their sacrifices are not in vain. In the new Age of Information, the free flow of ideas transcends physical and geographical boundaries. People everywhere can now draw inspiration from each other. In the new era, economic success and political freedom depend upon the free flow of thought, because access to facts, knowledge and information is the only way for people to make informed choices. The Secretary-General said that that calls for independent and pluralistic media, protected by law, to maintain independence and uphold ethical standards, backed up by professional training. Neither human rights nor personal dignity, he concluded, is secure without the free flow of information imparted through independent and pluralistic media.

10. Speaking on behalf of the Director-General of UNESCO, Henrikas Yushkiavitshus, Assistant Director-General for Communication, Information and Informatics, said that the very holding of this meeting was

a concrete expression of the efforts to build media infrastructures to strengthen democratic processes; UNESCO appreciated the efforts of the Kazakh authorities to ensure that that meeting took place in excellent conditions. He welcomed the new Member States to the United Nations and UNESCO (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan) and extended that welcome in anticipation to Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, which had expressed interest in joining UNESCO in the near future. He described the situation in Central Asia as breaking out of isolation: "No man is an island, we are islands no more." Referring to the 1991 Windhoek Seminar on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press, he said it affirmed the primacy of a free press as a foundation for a democratic society. The Assistant Director-General cited the new UNESCO communication strategy as a potential point of departure, saying that Central Asian countries had the opportunity to build their media infrastructure and legal framework from scratch. He urged all concerned to work together for peace and for the development of free, independent and pluralistic media.

11. The President of the International Federation of Newspaper Publishers, K. Prescott Low, said his organization represented more than 15,000 newspapers and other media outlets worldwide. The defence of a free and independent press is one of the main objectives of FIEJ. In this regard, he applauded the positive moves by the United Nations and UNESCO, and noted that FIEJ not only concentrates on editorial matters but also encourages the commercial development of the press.

12. The International Federation of Journalists was represented by an Executive Committee Member, Oon Ee Seng, who spoke on behalf of the President of IFJ. The Federation represents some 300,000 journalists in 81 trade unions or associations in 64 countries. He said that IFJ is constantly engaged in the struggle for the independence of journalists, press freedom, pluralism and the development of a democratic media culture. This is a partnership between journalists, publishers and broadcasters, and the public they serve. Oon concluded that the media need appropriate legislative space to provide a climate in which journalists can fulfil their role.

13. Cushrow Irani, Chairperson of the International Press Institute, began by pointing out that several Kazakh journalists had indicated to him that they had already learned a lot simply through their participation in the Seminar. He said that learning is a two-way process, and that the Seminar presented an opportunity for a mutual exchange of experiences. Irani then stated that Governments sometimes try to control the press for reasons of national economic advancement and to argue

that freedom of the press is not possible for countries that are not economically developed. On the contrary, he stressed, there is no relationship between the two concepts, and the primary value is always respect for human rights.

14. Speaking on behalf of four regional media institutions in Asia, Vijay Menon, Secretary-General of the Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre, said that those organizations collectively embodied about 100 hundred years of experience in the promotion and development of the media in Asia. He said that the Press Foundation of Asia, the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development, the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union and AMIC all had programmes designed to upgrade skills, improve management techniques, exchange information and experiences, and generally ensure the higher standards of productivity and growth necessary for the free media to play their full role.

Officers of the Seminar

15. The participants accepted by unanimous acclamation the proposal of the Consultative Committee for the nomination of officers of the Seminar. Cushrow Irani was thus elected Chairperson of the Seminar, with Kanak Mani Dixit as Rapporteur. Four Vice-Chairpersons were nominated: Altyn Galieva, So-Whan Hyon, Murad Muhammad Dost and Manich Sooksomchitra. The Chairperson of Working Group I was Oon Ee Seng and the Rapporteur was Razia Bhatti. Working Group II would be chaired by Hudson Samarasinghe, with the Rapporteur being Hima Douglas.

Organization of Work

16. In addition to the opening and closing ceremonies, the Seminar was organized in four plenary sessions, including a forum. There were also two working groups. The first day focused on the media situation in the Central Asian Republics. The second day's plenary session discussed the socio-economic and technical context of the media, which was followed on the third day by a discussion on media policy, legal and cultural aspects, and professional needs and human resources development. Background papers on these themes were prepared by specialists from Asia, and included two papers relating to the media situation in newly independent countries of Central Asia. In the afternoon of the second

and third days, the two working groups focused discussion on practical recommendations to be made by the Seminar. The final report was adopted in plenary session on the fifth and final day, Friday, 9 October 1992.

II The Media Situation in Central Asia

17. The keynote speaker, Cushrow Irani, Managing Director and Editor of *The Statesman* newspaper of India, reviewed a wide range of experiences which highlighted the conflicts between government and media. Irani said that each had its own role to play, the press serving the interests of the individual and Governments serving collective interests. Sometimes those spheres might overlap, but when they coincided it was safe to say that something was wrong. He illustrated that point by citing specific situations in Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Turkey, where the International Press Institute had made strong representations to Governments on free-press issues. Such issues included the killing of journalists, political pressure on media executives, and the anticipated introduction of Draconian legislation which would adversely affect the workings of the free press. In that task, he said, IPI had been successful either in reversing the proposed measures or in having interventions made at the highest levels of government.

18. Irani went on to question the way in which the press exercised its freedoms. He noted that there is no such thing as an ideal press and that, like other sectors of the community, it is liable to make mistakes. Hence, the press should always be prepared to accept criticism. The keynote speaker called upon the press to articulate the rights of citizens to receive information and said that it must act in advance of public opinion and not just follow it. Welcoming UNESCO's new role in the promotion of media freedom, Irani concluded by outlining the duties of the media, noting that the fundamentals of their operation are the same everywhere. Their duty is to report objectively, analyse logically and criticize fairly where criticism is due. "Let us not be preoccupied with the North, South, East or West—let us move forward", he stated.

19. The issues outlined in the keynote address were pursued by speakers in the ensuing debates, before which the Deputy Director of the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development, Hugh de Silva, outlined AIBD's role in training broadcasters to cope with issues of press freedom.

20. Altyn Galieva, the President of an independent television company, Asia TV, of Alma Ata, Kazakhstan, then introduced her report giving an overview of the current media situation in Central Asia. She analysed the situation in the former Soviet Union and indicated how the newly independent countries of the subregion had reacted to the changes. She said that there had been a great upsurge in the production and circulation of the print media in Central Asia since national independence and that the development of the electronic media had also been noteworthy. The Seminar had a direct bearing on mass media in Central Asia, particularly for the framing of new press and media laws.

21. The UNESCO Regional Adviser for Communication in Asia and the Pacific, Martin Hadlow, briefed the Seminar on his recent exploratory mission to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. In particular, he outlined the practical difficulties faced by newly emerging media outlets, and put forward some possible solutions in the form of a series of project profiles (annexed to his report), which could be elaborated and presented to international donor agencies.

22. Several participants from the newly independent countries of Central Asia took part in the discussions. Speaking as the Editor of an independent newspaper in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, Victor Zapolsky agreed with the report of the Regional Communication Adviser and presented an appraisal of the situation in Central Asia. He said that the people acted as if they had just been released from an ideological prison: "We act like people who are free but naked." There were no means for self-improvement. Zapolsky applauded the enthusiasm of independent journalists who often worked in difficult economic circumstances, but he also pointed out that the former government and Party bureaucracies still controlled the means of communication, though now through commercial enterprises. He suggested the creation of a truly independent organization in Bishkek or Alma Ata to monitor press freedom and other relevant issues in the subregion.

23. S. V. Duvanov, Vice-President of Kazakhstan "Tvin", described Central Asia as breathing the fresh air of freedom, but through State-run broadcasting. Less than 25 per cent of the population watched independent television and even fewer listened to independent radio. Either broadcasting was completely State-owned, or ownership was shared between the State and private companies, or it was completely private but dependent on the State for tax exemptions, licences, imports and credit. The result was a disguised dependency. Because of that dependency, many mass media outlets either chose to avoid politics altogether or toed the Government line.

24. Financial difficulties faced by newspaper publishers of the independent press in the region were pointed out by V. Zapolsky and Nina Savitskaya, Editor-in-Chief of *Birlesou*, Kazakhstan. They said that taxes were excessive and that credit had to be obtained from private banks, which demanded higher interest rates than the State banks. Hence, it was very difficult for independent newspapers to arrange investments.

25. Many participants stressed that the State distributed paper only to government newspapers and that independent newspapers had to buy it at very high prices on the black market. One newspaper publisher indicated that government newspapers were sold at 9.30 roubles each, compared to independent newspapers, which were sold at 52 roubles, forcing a choice for the public between newspapers and food.

26. Many stressed the problem of inadequate technical equipment for newspaper production. The Government maintained the printing monopoly, while the newly independent newspapers had no facilities at their disposal. In countries where the transportation system was not well-developed, a car was absolutely essential for journalists; a telephone was also indispensable, though not always available. While journalists expressed the need for training, they recognized the handicap of not being able to speak foreign languages; this hindered them from following many training courses abroad.

27. Yelkinbaeva, Editor of the magazine *Parasat*, Kazakhstan, and Zanghkasyn Amanov, journalist for *Islam Shadagaty*, discussed the new awareness of religion and how Islamic newspapers could function in a free atmosphere. Yelkinbaeva said that under the previous political system people had lost their religion and they had considered this a more serious problem than economic hardship.

28. Some participants and observers drew the attention of the Seminar to journalistic ethics, particularly with reference to religion and other possible areas of social conflict, and requested assistance from their colleagues present. Some journalists from the Central Asian States cited instances when their colleagues had been harassed or imprisoned by their Governments without trial. Some observers and participants stressed the need for such journalists to be released forthwith and for Governments to treat journalists under the rule of law.

29. There were some success stories recounted. According to Mirbobo Mirrahim, Chairperson of the Radio and Television Broadcasting Company, Tajikistan, 33 per cent of Alma Ata radio listeners preferred the newly

created independent radio station. He emphasized the need to develop relations with other television companies in Asia.

30. From the Pacific region, Nemani Delaibatiki, Editor of the *Daily Post* in Fiji, after first recounting the challenges faced by South Pacific media, said media practitioners in his country also had to keep up a constant struggle against repressive measures, particularly those initiated by the previous Government to license media organizations, journalists and commercial advertising and to draft an unfair criminal libel law. Because of strong media opposition, however, both measures had been dropped.

III *The Socio-economic and Technical Context of the Media*

31. The Chairperson, Cushrow Irani, opened the session by calling on Ambassador Diana Lady Dougan, Chair of International Communication Studies of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). Ambassador Dougan said that there should be a diversity in the means of communication and not just the content. While the flow of information is critical to development, it is also important to consider technological aspects. She said that the electronic media are the driving force today and that satellite broadcasting in particular will develop dramatically over the next five years, when more than 900 transponders are expected to be servicing Asia. Ambassador Dougan called for countries to make telecommunication delivery systems a high priority and to adopt laws and regulations which support the means of communication (such as taxation concessions) while developing the flow of information and ideas. "Government paternalism is not the way towards diversity of communication", she said; the best response to "cultural imperalism", which is a term of old, is diversity of media, regionalism, localism and "independent individualism".

32. The Chairperson then called upon the authors of the background papers, S. Nihal Singh, Director of the Press Institute of India, and Darryl Dorrington, Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Television New Zealand, to give brief oral presentations.

33. Nihal Singh introduced his paper and added that satellite television reception was becoming increasingly popular in the region. He also noted that in Central Asia changing the attitudes of journalists and

media personnel on how they look at authority would be one of the most difficult aspects of training in the future. Journalists should not get into the habit of looking to the authorities for handouts, he said.

34. Dorrington prefaced his remarks by pointing out that change is only the beginning of the process and not the end. He urged the Seminar participants to establish their own media organization models rather than import ideas from elsewhere. Dorrington said that technology is changing so rapidly that it is overtaking regulations and forcing Governments to alter their outdated laws. He cautioned that, while 24-hour global television is changing many things, it is important to consider the context and perspective of the programming being presented. Policy formulation, regulation and operation must be separated to allow for proper appraisal. Transborder communication is an issue that will have to be dealt with. Independence is a complex term, for it implies not only independence from Governments, but independence in skills, in funding, in reliance on supplies, and so on.

35. Speaking on the theme "Independent press: financing and management in a market economy", So-Whan Hyon, President and Publisher of Yonhap News Agency (Republic of Korea), said the transition from a command economy to a market economy was made all the more painful because there was no model to follow. There was none the less great need for an entrepreneurial spirit in a highly competitive arena. One also had to guard against cartel-backed regulations which in the past 20 years had provided a protective cover for the press as a business in Korea, and limited the competition. When the incumbent Government repealed restrictive regulations and framed new laws, many national and provincial newspapers entered the market scene. On the other hand, it could be said that at present there was a glut in the newspaper market. The mechanism of the market is ruthless and those who cannot cope are doomed. "Survival comes first because we are exposed to the full force of the market", he said. One also has to ensure professional and efficient management, financial monitoring, and relations with trade unions.

36. Turkish publishing executive Ahmet Gültekin Karasin advised that companies need to undertake long-term financial planning and to be aware of the latest economic trends to ensure their place in a competitive environment. He urged editors and publishers "to create value" for the customer, and to take advantage of quality, cohesiveness of management and new technology.

37. Former NHK Chief Executive Hisanori Isomura referred to the enormous revenue earned by electronic media organizations in Japan, reminding participants that the country had had to start from a very poor foundation only 40 years ago. A prerequisite for the success of the electronic media was to be faithful to the principle of competition. Isomura said success was also based on several factors, including a need to rationalize staff numbers, and gave the example of NHK, which had shed 7,000 jobs in the last decade. He also recommended that regular staff consultations and organizational planning are more important to long-term success than the efforts of individual executives. Isomura went on to say that the support of viewers is a further critical factor in success and that broadcasters should therefore concentrate on producing high-quality "flagship programmes". During the ensuing question period, he noted that, while transnational television could bring difficulties for local television stations, there were also some positive aspects, and that national broadcasters would have to become more competitive to survive.

38. Despite the recent civil insurrection in his country, said Hudson Samarasinghe, the former Chairman of the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, unprecedented stability had returned and had opened the way for more private television and radio systems. Therefore, it might be asked how long the government-sponsored electronic media would be able to sustain their viability. Samarasinghe said that, despite the rapidly developing economic situation in Sri Lanka, people were faithful to their traditional values and cultural aspirations. In that context, the media had to ensure that good taste was maintained, while at the same time maintaining commercial sustainability.

39. Hiroyuki Oguchi of the *Yomiuri Shimbun* gave a presentation on the latest technology that was in use at his newspaper, which had a circulation of 14.5 million, owned seven aircraft and had 40 overseas bureaux staffed by over 80 correspondents. Oguchi gave a detailed description of technological innovations that had been incorporated in various aspects of newspaper production, including editing, layout and design, scanning and plate-making.

40. In the context of the impact of new technologies and international interdependence, Sri Lankan broadcasting consultant Wijayananda Jayaweera began by discussing the potential of global satellite television. He indicated that affordable receiving equipment would be crucial to the development of the direct broadcast satellite (DBS) as a mass medium. Jayaweera was of the view that the currently available new technologies were not adequate to cater to the whole range of society's communica-

tion needs. He said that while the new technology had contributed to better global understanding, there was a great need for small-scale, community media to complement transnational operations. As Asia is primarily a rural society, he suggested that participatory broadcasting at the national and local levels would be one way to empower communities and individuals, by giving them access to the means of communication. Jayaweera concluded that transnational satellite television and locally based broadcasting could coexist, but that the local-level structure was still critical to the long-term interests of the development of a free press.

41. Following the observations by the panellists, discussion focused on the impact of transnational satellite-supported media on local cultures and whether the DBS system really supported the goals of pluralism in media. One speaker made the point that "Local broadcasting which is in touch with the grass roots will never be defeated by transnational broadcasting, and the fears of cultural inundation are only being expressed by government media which have lost touch." Another speaker highlighted the difficulty in restricting public access to programmes produced outside a country, and emphasized the need to develop "national software". Another suggestion was that smaller countries should create consortia both for access to satellite time and for programme production. "Localism in broadcasting must survive", said one participant.

42. Rather than concentrate on the "hi-tech" world of satellite television, it was important for the Seminar to concentrate on the "micro-producers" and small independent local broadcasters, stated another panellist. The many restrictions on and disabilities of these micro-producers must be eased and lifted. Another speaker noted that Governments, by not giving freedom to local broadcasters, were actually penalizing their own people and cultures, which in the meantime were being swamped by satellite television.

IV Media Policy, Legal and Cultural Aspects

43. Before beginning discussion on the socio-economic and technical context of the media, the Chairperson invited Thérèse Paquet-Sévigny, Consultant on Communication and Media, Canada, to speak. Expressing her thanks to the Government of Kazakhstan and the independent mass media for their intellectual and logistic support in organizing the Seminar, she recalled that the idea of the Seminar was first discussed in

1990, but it was only after the United Nations and UNESCO pooled efforts that the idea had become viable. She cited the well-known phrase, "An invasion of armies can be resisted, but not an idea whose time has come", particularly the idea of democratic values to which the United Nations is consecrated. Mrs. Paquet-Sévigny paid tribute to Federico Mayor, Director-General of UNESCO, to whom she referred as a convinced believer in freedom of the press. She urged Governments to form their national communication policies with the support of the United Nations, UNDP and UNESCO, and to work towards compatible standards, increases in telecommunications capacity, and reduced tariffs.

44. Ronald Koven, representing the World Press Freedom Committee, said that for years his organization had been fighting against efforts to impose a regimented press. Today, he was pleased to note, the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) had the mandate to strengthen pluralistic media. That was a welcome and dramatic shift. Continuing, he said that the most urgent problem for Central Asian media was to maintain independence from government interference. He recalled the Charter for a Free Press, adopted by the WPFC Conference on Censorship in 1987, which emphasized that private media must have the same access as the official media to all material facilities necessary for their broadcasting and publishing operations. With regard to ethnic conflicts, a subject raised by a number of Asian participants, he urged openness rather than censorship as a basis of understanding. "The best remedy for ethnic 'hate speech' is more free speech", he said.

45. The Chairperson of Working Group I on press management and marketing, Oon Ee Seng, then gave an oral summary of the Group's discussions, which covered ways of countering public and private monopolies, training and the use and application of new technologies. The Group ended its work with an endorsement, in principle, of the projects annexed to the report on the media situation in Central Asia.

46. In presenting his report, Hima Douglas, Acting Chairperson of Working Group II on public and private broadcasting—management and marketing, said the members had covered a broad range of subjects but had focused on the need to reaffirm the traditional roles of broadcasting in the service of the community (entertainment, information and education). The Group had also called for the formulation of comprehensive legal frameworks which encouraged pluralism in broadcasting. The Group emphasized the need for professional media associations, the advantages of diversity in media, and the need for an advertising code.

The members also endorsed, in principle, the projects annexed to the report on the media situation in Central Asia.

47. The Chairperson of the Seminar then called upon the author of the background paper on media ownership, editorial freedom and a legal framework, Eugenio Lopez, President of ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corporation, Manila. Lopez recalled that until 1972 the Philippine press had been among the most free in the world. The events of martial law, declared by the then President Ferdinand B. Marcos, had resulted in all broadcasting stations and newspapers opposed to the President being closed down. With the return to democracy in 1986, the country had witnessed phenomenal growth, including the development of satellite and cable technology. In that context, Lopez stressed the need to have economic freedom for pluralist media to prosper and that the media should serve the public. He also urged the sale of shares to the public to avoid the possibility of monopolistic private media emerging. Citing the example of his own company, Lopez said that "going public would help refute charges that the medium is being manipulated by oligarchs". In conclusion, he said that, despite potential difficulties and abuses, freedom of the media remained the only goal. "Self-regulation is better than government regulation."

48. The Chairperson then called upon the panellists. Presenting his paper on media policy in Asia—obstacles to freedom of information, Barnett R. Rubin (Center for the Study of Central Asia, Columbia University) hoped that the Seminar would find a way to state clearly its opposition to a number of obstacles to freedom of information, which included State monopolies and the licensing of all kinds of media. He stressed that there should be no laws limiting freedom of expression and referred to legislation concerning defamation of high officials, which he said should be abrogated. High officials, he said, were better able to defend themselves against defamation than ordinary citizens. Rubin insisted that in the democratization process the most important role of the press is to cultivate a society that can function independently of the State in religious, cultural, ethnic and economic matters. Freedom of expression, he said, can have an immediate impact on the most pressing questions of development and basic needs, such as hunger, environmental degradation and public health. Democracy requires a "self-organized society", and the press has a crucial role in developing such a society. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that the many women editors and journalists of the independent press in Central Asia would play an important role in changing the media situation in the region.

49. Hee S. Park, Senior Secretary to the President, Seoul Broadcasting Corporation, speaking on media ownership and editorial freedom, described his country as an example of successful diversification of the electronic media landscape. After ten years of domination by public broadcasting, the first private station, the Seoul Broadcasting System, was inaugurated in 1990. In the new situation of competition, commercial broadcasting had been very successful, and had forced public broadcasting to improve its production quality as well. This new era in Korean broadcasting was the result of a struggle by journalists and students with the full support of the people. He encouraged colleagues in Asia, faced with financial difficulties and government restrictions, to continue their fight for the freedom of the press.

50. Speaking on the same theme, Manich Sooksomchitra, Senior Editor of *The Thai-Rath Daily*, pointed out that the democratic situation in Thailand had enabled the media to do well as a business. However, despite the large number of media organizations, the problems identified earlier in the Seminar, such as lack of training for media professionals and the high price of newsprint, were also prevalent in Thailand. He warned of the danger of political groups seizing the power of State-owned media—the media should serve the country as a whole. Sooksomchitra emphasized that, although freedom of the press is the most important principle and guarantee of well-informed decision-making, political awareness and consciousness, it should be supported by such factors as law, morality and the right of the public to read and write.

51. Lee Yee, Editor-in-Chief of *The Nineties* newspaper of Hong Kong, speaking on media and the democratic process, said that freedom to think is meaningless without information and the ability to communicate, and that any effective democracy depends on an informed electorate. He regretted that in many Asian countries there was neither the degree of freedom nor the information necessary for productive political discussion. Lee also raised concern about the future of Hong Kong, where a long tradition of press freedom had led to the growth of the media sector. Recently a multi-satellite television station had begun to offer 24-hour service to more than 38 countries in Asia. That kind of service had consolidated Hong Kong's position as a media centre and had opened up further dimensions for broadening the dialogue in Asia.

52. During the ensuing discussion, Mehdi Tabeshian, Acting President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting Organization, noted that 95 per cent of the Iranian population was Muslim. In such an environment, a publication which undermined Islamic beliefs and ridiculed values could not be allowed to be published. He declared that the

people of the Islamic Republic of Iran wished neither to be alienated from the values of the West nor to be contaminated by the values of the North, but sought to enjoy the positive aspects of all cultures while retaining their own national and religious character.

53. Independent newspaper editor and publisher Andrei Sviridov highlighted the media situation in Kazakhstan and outlined several situations in which he claimed journalists and other media workers had been detained or harassed by the authorities.

54. Bhaskar Bhattacharji, the representative of the United Nations Development Programme, spoke on the importance of the press in highlighting development issues. He had noted Rubin's comments concerning the lack of information available to the public in some countries on such issues as famine and other calamities. He said that professional reporting on topical matters such as acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), famine and development was a sign of maturity of the press.

55. Max L. Snijders, Chairperson of the Board of the Communication Assistance Foundation, based in the Netherlands, urged individual journalists and editors to continue to speak out on issues of press freedom and persecution of journalists. He said that, unless brave people were willing to come forward with relevant information, matters would never come to the attention of international forums such as the current Seminar.

V Professional Needs and Human Resources Development

56. As the International Programme for the Development of Communication had been mentioned on many occasions during the Seminar, the Chairperson invited the IPDC President, Torben Krogh, to outline its aims and operations. In his presentation, Krogh drew the attention of participants to the changes in project selection criteria which had taken place since the Windhoek Seminar of 1991. Previously, projects submitted to IPDC for funding assistance had had to receive national government approval. Now, however, they could be submitted directly with the support of a non-governmental organization affiliated to UNESCO or a foundation. That was advantageous to the private and independent media seeking financial support to develop a free and pluralistic press, he said.

57. The Chairperson then introduced the subject of professional needs and human resources development by inviting the Manager of Training and Special Projects of the Press Foundation of Asia, Vicente G. Tirol, to take the floor. Tirol outlined the various services offered by PFA and, in particular, mentioned the need for the training of journalists in relation to new political and economic climates in emerging democracies. Subject areas for such training included the role of the press in a market economy and the position of journalists in democratic societies. Tirol also encouraged the establishment of press institutes in Central Asia, as such organizations would be able to promote press freedom, undertake research and publish books and training materials.

58. The Deputy Director of the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development, Hugh de Silva, linked AIBD's role as an electronic media agency with that of PFA, which primarily supported the print media. AIBD sought to encourage independent journalism by providing reporters and other media personnel with the necessary craft, skills and expertise to cope adequately with the demands of the profession. De Silva agreed with the project profiles detailed in UNESCO's paper on the media situation in Central Asia and suggested that they be developed further for consideration and possible funding by donor agencies. Since Governments tend to retain colonial attitudes *vis-à-vis* the media, he emphasized the need for media to "cut their apron strings" and become independent. There is a need to develop a sense of pride in journalistic professionalism "so that you do not bend your principles".

59. Rajendra Prabhu, representing the National Union of Journalists of India, discussed the role played by organizations of professional journalists. He stressed that the place of journalists is with the people and not with those in power. Prabhu outlined the lessons his own organization had learned over the years in fighting to maintain press freedom in India against various bills introduced by the Government. He said that media organizations should act as pressure groups where press freedom is under threat, speak out on specific issues, play the role of watchdog, undertake training activities, and also offer assistance to colleagues in other countries to enable them to gain or maintain press freedom.

60. Adlai J. Amor, Head of the Conservation News Service of the World Wide Fund for Nature and former senior executive of the Press Foundation of Asia, recounted PFA's early experience in training in the Asian region. He stressed the importance of a proper and detailed assessment of training needs and said that training should be tailored to reflect specific requirements. Amor saw special significance in the training of

trainers, because it would have a "flow-on" effect at the national level, particularly as training could then be carried out by local experts in local languages. He gave an overview of the international donor funding situation and cautioned against overly high expectations of donors' abilities to fund projects. In the process of asking for aid, one must also make sure that there are counterpart resources and manpower so that there will be genuine partnership between donor and recipients.

61. K. Prescott Low, President of the International Federation of Newspaper Publishers, briefly outlined his organization's operations and stressed FIEJ's desire to cooperate with other media development and training organizations so as not to duplicate activities.

62. A number of participants from Asia and the Pacific then spoke on the issues raised by the panel speakers. These matters covered such subjects as press freedom and the role of journalists in Asia. William Parkinson from Communications Fiji, Ltd., outlined the South Pacific experience in promoting press freedom. He said that while it is important to convince politicians and other authorities of the need for an independent and investigative press, it is also vital to get the support of the ordinary citizen, who often gives little thought to this precious right. He gave specific examples of how publicity campaigns had been launched to this end.

63. The session concluded with a brief presentation by George Afonin, a representative of the Union of Young Kazakhstan Journalists. He said that some 300 young reporters worked in Kazakhstan to publish over 150 news sheets, and requested both moral and financial assistance from the Seminar to enable them to continue their task.

64. The Chairperson, Cushrow Irani, then advised the Seminar that, because of pressing commitments elsewhere, he would be leaving Alma Ata later in the day. He thanked the panellists, the Kazakh hosts and the participants for the assistance they had given him during his tenure as Chairperson. He proposed that Oon Ee Seng, the General Secretary of the National Union of Journalists in Malaysia, should take over the role of Chairperson for the remainder of the Seminar. The Seminar participants agreed to that proposal by acclamation. The Assistant Director-General of UNESCO's Communication, Information and Informatics Sector, Henrikas Yushkiavitshus, thanked Irani for his contribution as Chairperson and wished him well in the future.

65. The Seminar heard the reports of the two working groups. The report of Working Group I related to media ownership and editorial freedom.

Among other things, it stressed the need for diversity of media ownership; coordination among donors and support agencies; high-quality public service broadcasting; sensitizing those who made media policy; special assistance for women working in the media; and the need to end monopolies of all kinds.

66. The report of Group II on the subject of training for media professionals was delivered by its Acting Chairperson, Hima Douglas. The report outlined many recommendations, including the training of media management professionals. The Group also suggested the utilization of such agencies as the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development and other regional training organizations. The need to "train the trainers" was seen as a matter of high priority. The report noted that the representative of the Tajikistan State Radio and Television Broadcasting Company had offered the use of its technical facilities for training purposes.

67. The Secretary of the Seminar, Alain Modoux, then briefed the meeting on the manner in which the participants had been selected. Because of the lack of information regarding media persons active in Central Asia, not all those deserving might have received invitations, but he stressed that the Seminar had made every effort to allow an open atmosphere. Stressing that all media people were welcome to participate, he went on to reiterate UNESCO's policy on support for both the public and private-sector media, which had been the outcome of the meeting last year at Windhoek, Namibia.

68. The Acting Chairperson, Oon Ee Seng, gave the floor to Alexander Romanov, Director of independent Radio-Television Pyramida of Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Romanov said that the Seminar was very important, as there were many problems facing the independent press in Central Asia. Romanov was encouraged to learn of UNESCO's priority in seeking funds for the development of independent media. Referring to the "bitter experience of the past", he said slow but steady steps were being taken to make mass media respond to the needs of pluralism.

69. Rajendra Prabhu of the National Union of Journalists in India wished to stress that there is as much danger to freedom and democracy in a market economy as in a collectivist one. It is necessary, he said, for media persons to exercise constant vigilance. He reiterated his view that media trade unions are not merely organizations seeking to provide better working conditions for members, but should also be seen as powerful instruments of vigilance for the defence of freedom. Media unions, he said, must act as a countervailing force against media owners.

Journalists of countries which had recently gained freedom must be made aware that global publishing enterprises were looking to that region as green pastures for expansion.

70. James McClatchy, representing the Inter-American Press Association (IAPA), an organization which covered the Americas and had some 1,200 members, said that his association was active in the never-ending struggle for free speech and freedom of the press. He cited examples of journalists who had been killed while performing their duties in Latin America, and of detailed efforts made by IAPA to resolve situations in which journalists had been victimized, including six Colombian reporters who had died in the last six months alone. McClatchy suggested that if a regional media association were to be formed in Central Asia, it should concentrate on one issue, namely free speech, as the addition of other issues would tend to complicate matters. Journalists, he said, must strive for "total independence" from economic and political groups, even though it was true that "perfection is not attainable".

71. Albert Musin, former editor of *The Independent* weekly in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, said that the situation regarding press freedom in that Republic had been bad previously, but had deteriorated even further since the collapse of the Soviet Union. He claimed that virtually no free press existed, several papers had recently been closed down, editors had been laid off, and newsprint had been taken for other purposes. Reporters had been harassed and even forced to emigrate, and newspapers were being threatened so that they would toe the government line.

72. The Chairperson of the Kazakhstan Union of Journalists, Kamal Smailov, suggested that the Seminar should look at Kazakhstan media "through the prism of competent sources". Referring to the statement on Wednesday by independent journalist Andrei Sviridov, he said that some of the people mentioned in that speech were not journalists and that some of the newspapers were not, in fact, newspapers. Smailov also spoke of the problems facing the press in the Republic and recommended the establishment of a fund to assist with the purchase of newsprint and printing technology.

73. The experience of Cambodia was recounted by an information executive in his country, Sereywath Ek. He noted that Cambodia was moving towards free and fair elections supervised by the United Nations as part of the internationally sponsored peace process. At present, the press in Cambodia was "semi-free", and several independent newspapers were available, along with one television channel and four radio stations. A media code had been prepared in cooperation with the United Nations

Transitional Authority for Cambodia, and it was hoped that a free flow of information could be ensured in the future. Major problems facing the development of the Cambodian media are the lack of trained journalists and the lack of technology, he said.

74. The President of the Union of Mongolian Journalists, Tsegmidiin Munkhjargal, said that, while the country was moving to a market economy, the Government found it financially difficult to assist the development of the mass media. He said the press wished to be at the forefront of moves towards democracy and development in Mongolia, but it required assistance in that task.

75. The availability of funding support from specific organizations was outlined by Max L. Snijders, Chairperson of the Board of the Communication Assistance Foundation, in the Netherlands. He briefed participants on projects funded by CAF in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, the Philippines, Singapore and elsewhere and offered the help of his organization in a wide range of activities.

76. The situation in Kazakhstan was further highlighted in a presentation by Ibrahim Kozhachanov, Director of the private information agency SOC-IN, and representative of the Foundation for International Support for Reforms in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. He said there were many problems between the Government and the mass media. The lack of credible information meant that rumours became rife, and were exploited by special interest groups. He saw that as a sign of the current immature stage of the mass media.

77. Indonesia's experiences in attempting to establish a free press were provided by journalist Nasir Tamara Tamimi. He said that the period between 1945 and 1959 was the only one in which there had been press freedom in his country. Since then the press in Indonesia had been repressed, even though Indonesia had been a "capitalist country since 1965". Among the problems holding back the development of independent media was that the press outlets still needed a government licence to operate, and the granting of licences was often subject to political criteria. It was impossible to establish alternative journalists' unions in the country, he noted. He said the support of the United Nations and UNESCO would go a long way in the fight for freedom of the press in his country, as elsewhere. He called for international solidarity to fight for the freedom of the press.

78. Farkhot Ruziev, from the President's Office in the Republic of Uzbekistan, took the floor to respond to the remarks by Albert Musin,

who, he said, had presented inaccurate information on the situation in his Republic. He said the Government was justified in stopping publication of newspapers whose reports tended to incite racial tension and which were consistently critical of the new States of Central Asia. Special interest groups tended to gain advantage from the presentation of such news. He noted that the international community gained information about Uzbekistan only through Moscow-based agencies. The CIS States were in economic crisis, and news which provoked panic could destabilize society and promote inter-ethnic tension. One of the problems facing the development of the press in Uzbekistan was the cost of newsprint, which had increased 40 times. The President of Uzbekistan had made available 100 million roubles to the independent newspapers to alleviate the situation. Uzbekistan was keen to establish an independent and free press, to attract foreign newspapers and to allow free circulation, he stated.

79. The Secretary-General of the Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre, Vijay Menon, called for the participants to be aware not only of the need to build pluralistic media, but also of how to stop the erosion of pluralism where it already existed. In such instances, corrective measures must be contemplated. Citing an example, he said Asia was becoming a marketplace for global television operations. That was unfair to broadcasters in small countries who were unable to compete.

80. Barnett R. Rubin, from Columbia University, asked the Seminar to broaden the scope of the meaning of "independence of the press". He said that freedom from government interference had been discussed at the Seminar, but he believed it was also important to have "freedom from communal and nationalistic pressures". In that context, he mentioned Sri Lanka, where there had sometimes been intimidation of the press by various ethnic groups, and journalists had been forced to present an "ethnic consensus". He also referred to the nationalist, religious and ethnic differences coming to the surface in Central Asia. Journalists of the region had a responsibility to remain critical not only of government but also of their own societies and ethnic groupings.

81. The Director of the Press Institute of India, S. Nihal Singh, made a brief intervention in relation to earlier comments on freedom of the press in Malaysia. He said Malaysia's was not the sort of press freedom that he would like to have and he did not recommend it as an example for Central Asia to follow.

82. Following Rubin's theme, the Chairperson of the Tajik State Radio and Television Broadcasting Company, Mirbobo Mirrahim, talked of tensions between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

83. The situation in the Republic of Turkmenistan was referred to by Jeren Taimova, Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the *Evening Ashgabat* newspaper. She said economic factors were not always a common element in the hindrance of press development in Central Asia. She cited the fact that, although Turkmenistan had no budget deficit, independent media were almost non-existent in her Republic. There was a great need for journalists to learn craft skills and to study the role of a free press. Pluralism in the media must be combined with the knowledge of the great responsibility that it also involves. Pluralism brings with it new challenges. She was not sure how the three Central Asian States would go about building an independent press, as there were no ready-made remedies. It was only now, after leaving the heavily regulated political system of the former Soviet Union behind, that journalists realized the power of the media. "Before we only knew of the Government's word," she said.

VI Conclusions

84. Before proceeding to the adoption of the draft report, the Acting Chairperson opened the floor to participants and observers who had not had an opportunity to speak. William Parkinson of Communications Fiji, Ltd., expressed his sincere thanks to the organizers and offered the assistance of both his own private radio company and the Pacific Islands Broadcasting Association. He remarked that the defence of media freedom was a concern of the region, and not only of individual countries. In reply to several participants and delegates who raised questions regarding jailed or slain journalists, Kuanish Sultanov, Kazakhstan's Minister for Press and Media, said that democracy was a process of change, and that 70 years of totalitarianism would not disappear overnight. He appealed to journalists to be serious and responsible. Ronald Koven of the World Press Freedom Committee and Neal Swancott of the International Federation of Journalists said that there was a fund to assist journalists taken to court. Swancott further remarked that it was common for journalists to be on the side of the opposition; with that fund, efforts to silence journalists would be in vain. The former Chairman of the Kazakh State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company, currently with the Presidential Press Office, said the Seminar had been a new

step forward for the development of independent media. Referring to the report on the situation of media in Central Asia, he urged the adoption of the 11 projects cited therein.

Adoption of the Report

85. After several participants offered their suggestions for improving the text of the report and of the Declaration of Alma Ata (*see Part II*), the Acting Chairperson proposed that the suggestions should be given in writing to the secretariat, which would finalize them and refine the style of the report. Upon a motion put forward by Nasir Tamara Tamimi, the report and Declaration of Alma Ata were approved by acclamation.

Closing Ceremony

86. To close the Seminar, the Acting Chairperson, Oon Ee Seng, gave the floor to Kuanish Sultanov, Minister for Press and Media, who described the Seminar as a concrete way of enabling the Kazakh people to participate more actively in world integration, communication and information. Despite criticisms, the Government of Kazakhstan none the less strongly supported democratic processes and sought cooperation with democratic movements and progressive-minded people. The Minister said that freedom of expression and of the press was guaranteed by the Constitution; citizens had the right to express their opinions and views openly and to search, choose, receive and disseminate information and ideas in any media. On the other hand, it was the responsibility of the press and broadcasting media to tell the unbiased truth. This Seminar had also brought home the necessity of educating people in several foreign languages and of setting up an international institute for the training of interpreters. The Minister stressed the desire of Kazakhstan to participate actively in the UNESCO programme Communication in the Service of Humanity and in exchange programmes, journalism training, management and new technology. On the eve of the second millennium, the Minister said, Kazakhstan might well regain its traditional role as the crossroads connecting East and West on the old Silk Road.

87. UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Communication, Information and Informatics, Henrikas Yushkiavitshus, then thanked the Kazakh hosts for their excellent Seminar arrangements, and for the warm hospitality offered to all. Referring to the final report, the Declaration of

Alma Ata and the many contributions of the participants, he said, "A seed has been planted. We must now make the trees grow."

88. The United Nations Co-Coordinator of the Seminar, Chief of Section in the United Nations Department of Public Information, Mustapha Tlili, speaking on behalf of the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Public Information, Eugeniusz Wyzner, also thanked the hosts and participants. He paid special tribute to Thérèse Paquet-Sévigny, former United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Public Information, who supported both the Windhoek and the Alma Ata seminars.

89. The final oration was given by the Presiding Officer of the opening ceremony, Anuar Alimzanov. Referring to a law of Genghis Khan, that "a man can be beheaded but one cannot cut out his tongue", Alimzanov underscored the need for a free press, but also the need for truth and constructive criticism. He stressed the need for economic independence, as well as social and political independence. In closing, he said that "through this Seminar, we are standing on the 'steppes' to democracy".

Working Group I

Press Management and Marketing

Working Group I was chaired by Oon Ee Seng, assisted by Razia Bhatti as Rapporteur. The first session discussed the theme "Press management and marketing".

During the lengthy discussions on restrictive press laws in the region, the Working Group concluded that the principles contained in the Windhoek Declaration were also appropriate for the Asian region. The Group recommended that where State or private monopolies existed for newspaper and magazine distribution, a system of independent distribution should be encouraged. Similarly, where printing facilities were monopolized or dominated by the State, or by State-controlled or State-sponsored companies, it was important to foster the establishment of independent printing houses to service the independent media without discrimination. Where discriminatory taxation between State-supported media and independent media existed, Governments should be pressed to end such discrimination.

The Working Group further recommended the development of training projects to increase the professional status and expertise of journalism teachers, journalism training institutions, managers and technicians. Such projects should be undertaken in conjunction with national and international associations and federations of journalists, editors, publishers and journalism trainers. Proposals of cooperation had been made by IFJ, FIEJ, PFA, AIBD, AMIC, IPI and CAF. Those activities should be coordinated to avoid duplication and overlapping. A pool of 20 consultants should be created to assist independent newspapers.

It was also suggested that study tours and exchange programmes should be expanded to enable media professionals to learn from foreign experiences; that special programmes should be designed to increase the flow of information from other regions into Central Asia, as well as within the Asian region; and that manuals, textbooks and study materials on newspaper management skills, advertising and journalists' ethics should be published in local languages.

The Working Group recommended the promotion, in conjunction with international professional associations, of legislation on the introduction of freedom of information and the right of the public to have access to information held by the Government. A feasibility study was proposed on alternative methods of acquiring and distributing newsprint in situations where newsprint is a State monopoly. The study should also examine ways of increasing the availability of newsprint at affordable prices.

New technologies, such as desktop publishing, community radio, and electronic news production, were encouraged. Collective purchase of newsprint and media equipment should also be worked out.

Considering the high cost of bank loans for small businesses in Central Asia (with interest rates of 100 to 150 per cent), the Working Group supported publishers' appeals for access to low-interest credit. It proposed the establishment of data centres to supply information free of charge to publishers and journalists.

The Group recommended holding, in conjunction with relevant national and international professional organizations and the relevant United Nations agencies, a series of national and subregional seminars covering:

- Management, marketing and technical skills for publishers;
- International principles of freedom of speech, freedom of expression, freedom of information and freedom of the press;
- International principles of freedom of association;
- Principles of editorial democracy, and the relationship between the editorial department of a newspaper, the board of directors and the administrative, advertising and commercial departments;
- Appropriate curricula and training methodology for journalism training institutions.

The Working Group recommended promotion of the right of journalists to exercise their profession safely, and the extension to Asia of the proposed IFEX (International Freedom of Information Exchange) Action Alert Network, aimed specifically at the safety of journalists and at press freedom issues. It underlined the need to avoid overlapping of alert and monitoring systems.

The Group adopted in principle the projects proposed by the UNESCO Regional Communication Adviser for Asia, pending further discussion, refinement and preparation of full documentation.

Media Ownership and Editorial Freedom

At the beginning of the session, several participants from Central Asia and the Pacific spoke about their personal struggles for press freedom. Helen Darbishire, the representative of Article 19, informed participants about the goals and main activities of that association.

The Working Group endorsed the principles of the Windhoek Declaration relating to editorial freedom, in particular the principle that independence of the media precluded any kind of monopoly.

The Group agreed with the suggestion that it was not sufficient just to convince editors, publishers, broadcasters and journalists of the need for editorial freedom; it was also necessary to convince policy makers and legislators. To that end, it was proposed that seminars should be organized to raise awareness concerning that important principle prior to the drafting of new press laws.

The Group also recommended the establishment of a group of experts to study media legislation and operating conditions in the region and to recommend which parts of laws should be maintained to guarantee press freedom. Furthermore, the Group agreed that there was a need either to establish regional resource and information centres or to create an information network connecting all capital cities of the region.

The Chairperson of the International Programme for the Development of Communication proposed the undertaking of a feasibility study to evaluate the possibilities of implementing a public service broadcasting system in Asia. That idea was endorsed by the Working Group.

The Group believed that training should be increased at all levels to promote the principles of press freedom and the independence of journalists. It was also suggested that the professional organizations should coordinate their activities to avoid duplication and wastage. The IPDC Chairperson furthermore suggested that existing training centres should be reinforced. In training programmes, special emphasis should be given to the needs of women, particularly in relation to job opportuni-

ties, promotion and career advancement, and to minority groups within communities.

The Working Group underlined the necessity of translating into Asian languages the training materials existing in the region.

Working Group II

Public and Private Broadcasting: Management and Marketing

Working Group II was chaired by Hudson Samarasinghe, with Hima Douglas as Rapporteur. The Group strongly felt that the Seminar should re-emphasize the importance of broadcasting in its role of serving the community, but broadcasters must also demonstrate that they deserved that confidence. It was worth while to reaffirm the traditional roles of educating, entertaining and informing, the Group stated.

The Group recognized that there would always be diversity in the ownership of the electronic media. However, such diversity is a strength rather than a weakness, for very often private electronic media provide the impetus for State-owned or public broadcasters to improve their service. In the media arena, there is room for both private and public broadcasters, as well as for community radio.

The Group recognized the need for a properly formulated legal basis on which broadcasters can operate—ever mindful that such legislation must not encroach on the rights of the broadcaster to serve the community without bias or prejudice.

Working Group II endorsed the proposals put forward by the UNESCO Regional Communication Adviser for Asia and the Pacific in the paper on the situation of media in Central Asia. It also recognized the mutual advantages that broadcasters in the region could gain by sharing experiences, possibly through the formation of a professional association.

With the emergence of private radio, for which the primary source of income would be from advertising, the Group recognized the need for an advertising code but made no specific recommendations. Questions were raised on the role, the function and the purpose of private broadcasters versus public broadcasters, but no clear definition emerged.

Media Training

At the second meeting of Working Group II, Hima Douglas acted as Chairperson and Wijayananda Jayaweera was nominated to act as Rapporteur.

The Group focused on the problems of providing training to media organizations in newly independent Central Asian countries. In devising media training projects, the Group emphasized the necessity of considering the following points.

A regular visiting consultant would be more effective in media training in Central Asia. During successive visits he or she could evaluate training inputs, readjust the training programmes, if required, and advise management in utilizing the learning gained by trainees.

Management training should be considered a high-priority area because, if management were not ready to accept the new concepts and learning, or were not in a position to provide the necessary facilities, newly trained media personnel would become frustrated once back on the job.

A directory of training institutes, with the details of training courses offered, should be made available for the media organizations of the region. The Group noted the necessity of recognizing the difference between the training needs of large and small media organizations.

Expertise should be used to identify the training needs of the media organizations in Central Asia. Utility of the training in actual job situations should be considered as vital because media organizations in the region might not possess the type of advanced equipment used in established training programmes.

Regional training centres, such as the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development, should be used to give specific training. The Group accepted the suggestion of utilizing the AIBD Training Methodology course as a way to groom potential local trainers. Preparation of the local trainers was especially important because many media personnel in Central Asia were not able to acquire new training owing to language barriers. The Group noted that, although it was an intergovernmental organization, AIBD also offered training opportunities for private broadcasting institutes.

The Group recommended that press institutes and broadcasting training institutes should work closely with the universities and other academic

institutions that offered degrees and diploma programmes in journalism and broadcasting in order to improve the existing curricula and make them more relevant to new requirements in the various media fields. On-the-job training in various media organizations should be an important component of those degree courses.

The Group recommended the recruitment of lecturers in mass communication from reputable universities in the Asian region to assist the departments of journalism/mass communication of universities in Central Asia.

The Group took note of the request made by a young trainee journalist who said that, beyond the training of new trainees, it was also necessary to train senior professionals, because she felt many of them still had wrong perceptions. One member emphasized the necessity of giving attention to "unlearning obsolete practices".

The Group expressed its satisfaction with the clarification that UNESCO funding was no longer limited to State-owned media; on the contrary, priority in funding, as expressed in the Windhoek Declaration, would be given to independent mass media organizations.

Declaration of Alma Ata on Promoting Independent and Pluralistic Asian Media

We the participants in the United Nations/United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Seminar on Promoting Independent and Pluralistic Asian Media, held in Alma Ata, Kazakhstan, from 5 to 9 October 1992,

Recalling Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media, and regardless of frontiers",

Recalling General Assembly Resolution 59(I) of 14 December 1946, stating that freedom of information is a fundamental human right, and General Assembly Resolution 45/76 A of 11 December 1990, on information in the service of humanity,

Recalling resolution 104 adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO at its twenty-fifth session in 1989, in which the main focus is the promotion of "the free flow of ideas by word and image—at international as well as national levels",

Recalling resolution 4.3 adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO at its twenty-sixth session in 1991, which recognizes that a free, pluralistic and independent press is an essential component of any democratic society and which endorses the Declaration adopted by the participants at the United Nations/UNESCO Seminar on "Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press", held in Windhoek, Namibia, from 29 April to 3 May 1991,

Stressing the growing role of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), whose Intergovernmental Council decided, at its February 1992 session, to give priority to projects which seek to reinforce independent and pluralistic media,

Noting with appreciation the message of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Seminar, delivered on his behalf by his representative, the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and the statement made by the Assistant Director-General for Communication, Information and Informatics of UNESCO on behalf of the Director-General of UNESCO at the opening of the Seminar,

Expressing our sincere appreciation to the United Nations and UNESCO for organizing the Seminar,

Expressing our gratitude to the Government and people of the Republic of Kazakhstan for their kind hospitality, which facilitated the success of the Seminar,

Expressing also our sincere appreciation to all the intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental bodies and organizations, in particular the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which contributed to the United Nations/UNESCO effort to organize the Seminar,

Recognizing the historic emergence of newly independent media in the Central Asian Republics of the former Soviet Union, and the need to build upon the innovative achievements of the Seminar in Africa,

Declare our full support for, and total commitment to, the fundamental principles of the Declaration of Windhoek, and acknowledge its importance as a milestone in the struggle for free, independent and pluralistic print and broadcast media in all regions of the world.

Specific Project Proposals

In Asia and the Pacific, including the newly independent Central Asian Republics of the former Soviet Union, which identify with the Asian region, we seek practical application of the principles enshrined in the Declaration of Windhoek, in conjunction with relevant national and international professional organisations and relevant UN agencies, in the following specific project proposals and in the following fields:

1. Legislation

To give expert advice and legal drafting assistance to replace redundant press laws inherited at independence with laws that create enforceable rights to freedom of expression, freedom of opinion, access to information and freedom of the press; to abolish monopolies and all forms of discrimination in broadcasting and allocation of frequencies, in printing, newspaper and magazine distribution, and in newsprint production and distribution; and to abolish barriers to launching new publications, and discriminatory taxation.

2. Training

To promote a programme of national in-country and subregional seminars and/or training courses covering:

(a) professional skills, including extensive training and treatment of development issues;

(b) management, marketing and technical skills for the print and broadcast media;

(c) international principles of freedom of speech, freedom of expression, freedom of information and freedom of the press;

(d) international principles of freedom of association, management/staff relations, collective bargaining skills and the rights and responsibilities of representative associations of journalists, editors, broadcasters and publishers;

(e) principles of journalists' independence and the relationship between the editorial department of a newspaper, the board of directors and the administrative, advertising and commercial departments;

(f) appropriate curricula and training methodology for journalism training institutions (including tutor/lecturer exchange programmes) and special trainer programmes;

(g) access to training programmes and facilities;

(h) codes of conduct relating to advertising in the broadcast media;

(i) the rights of women in the media, and the rights of minority groups within societies.

3. Free Flow of Information

As a matter of urgency:

(a) To support the establishment of media resource centres in the Central Asian Republics where journalists and other media personnel can gain access to international news and information, manuals, textbooks and study materials, and where they can utilize desktop publishing equipment to prepare material for publication;

(b) to assist independent media in the upgrading of production, content and presentation of television news and current affairs programmes through the provision of new technology and the exposure of staff to modern and alternative production techniques and values;

(c) to assist in the establishment of an intercountry news exchange service, in order to increase the flow of international, national and regional news and information to and from neighbouring countries, and to help upgrade technology and develop more extensive communication links.

4. Safety of Journalists

To support the right of journalists to exercise their profession safely, and to establish a protection centre (or centres) in the region to link up with the proposed IFEX (International Freedom of Information Exchange) Action Alert Network for Asia, aiming specifically at the safety of journalists and press freedom issues.

5. Public Service Broadcasting

To encourage the development of journalistically independent public service broadcasting in place of existing State-controlled broadcasting structures, and to promote the development of community radio.

To upgrade educational broadcasting through support for distance education programmes such as English-language instruction and formal and non-formal education, literacy programmes, and information programmes on AIDS, the environment, children etc.

6. Professional Associations

To assist Central Asian journalists, editors, publishers and broadcasters in establishing truly independent representative associations, syndicates or trade unions of journalists and associations of editors, publishers and broadcasters where such bodies do not yet exist.

7. Special Economic Issues

To identify economic barriers to the creation of new, independent media in Central Asia and in particular to arrange a feasibility study into alternative methods of acquiring and distributing newsprint, alternative facilities for printing and distributing newspapers and magazines and alternative means of obtaining low-interest credit.

□ □ □

The above projects, while identified as specific needs of Central Asian media, have region-wide applications. The participants call on UNESCO and its International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), the United Nations, in particular the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), international professional organizations, donor countries, foundations and other interested parties to contribute generously to, and cooperate in, the implementation of these initiatives.

The participants request that this Declaration be presented by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the United Nations General Assembly, and by the Director-General of UNESCO to the General Conference of UNESCO.

Alma-Ata, 9 October 1992

ANNEX I

Programme of the Seminar

Monday, 5 October 1992

10.00 ***Opening Ceremony***

STATEMENTS BY:
Prime Minister Sergei Tereschenko
Representative of the United Nations
Representative of UNESCO
Representative of the International Federation of Newspaper Publishers
Representative of the International Federation of Journalists
Representative of the International Press Institute
Representative of Asian media organizations

11.00 ***Break***

11.30 ***Plenary Session (Independence and Pluralism in the Media)***

Election of Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons and General Rapporteur
Presentation of the Seminar programme
Keynote address: Independence and pluralism in the Asian media

General discussion

13.00 ***Lunch***

14.30 ***Plenary Session (Forum)***

Presentation of background paper on the media situation in Central Asia
Reports by pioneers of the independent press and broadcasting in Asia

16.00 ***Break***

16.30 ***Forum continues***

General discussion

Tuesday, 6 October 1992

9.00 ***Plenary Session (The Socio-economic and Technical Context of the Media)***

Presentation of background papers

PANEL:

Independent press: financing and management in a market economy

Independent electronic media: financing and management in a market economy

Current means of production for print media and the potential applications of new communication technologies

The electronic media: new technologies and international interdependence

10.45 ***Break***

11.15 ***Plenary Session continues***

General discussion

13.00 ***Lunch***

14.30 ***Working Groups***

(Moderators and rapporteurs to be designated)

I. Press management and marketing

II. Public and private broadcasting: Management and marketing

16.00 ***Break***

16.30 ***Working Groups continue***

Wednesday, 7 October 1992

Media Policy, Legal and Cultural Aspects; Professional Needs and Human Resources Development)

9.00 ***Plenary Session***

Reports of the Working Groups (from previous day)
Presentation of background papers

PANEL:
Media and the democratic process
Media ownership and editorial freedom
Legal framework for independent and pluralistic media

10.45 ***Break***

11.45 ***Panel continues***

Training
Professional organizations

General discussion

13.00 ***Lunch***

14.30 ***Working Groups***

I. Media ownership and editorial freedom
II. Training of media professionals

16.30 ***Break***

17.00 ***Working Groups continue***

Thursday, 8 October 1992

9.00 ***Plenary Session continues***

Reports of the Working Groups (from previous day)

General discussion

10.45 ***Break***

11.15 ***Plenary Session continues***

General discussion

13.00 ***Lunch***

14.30 ***Preparation of draft report by drafting group (Cultural programme for other participants)***

Friday, 9 October 1992

9.00 ***Plenary Session***

Discussion on and adoption of final report, conclusions and recommendations for action

12.00 ***Closing Ceremony***

List of Panellists

Monday, 5 October 1992

Cushrow Irani (Keynote speaker)

Independent and Pluralistic Media in Asia

Tuesday, 6 October 1992

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL CONTEXT OF THE MEDIA

1. *So-Whan Hyon*
   Ahmet G. Karasin

   Independent Press: Financing and Management in a Market Economy

2. *Hisanori Isomura*
   Hudson Samarasinghe

   Independent Electronic Media: Financing and Management in a Market Economy

3. *Hiroyuki Oguchi*

   Current Means of Production for Print Media and the Potential Applications of New Communication Technologies

4. *Wijayananda Jayaweera*

   The Electronic Media: New Technologies and International Interdependence

Wednesday, 7 October 1992

MEDIA POLICY, LEGAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS; PROFESSIONAL NEEDS AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

1. *Barnett R. Rubin*
   Lee Yee
   Media and the Democratic Process

2. *Hee S. Park*
Media Ownership and Editorial Freedom

3. *Adlai J. Amor*
Training

4. *K. Prescott Low*
Rajendra Prabhu
Professional Organizations

ANNEX II

List of Papers Presented

Background paper on socio-economic aspects of the independent press in Asia
(S. Nihal Singh; KAZ/92/3)

Socio-economic aspects of independent broadcasting in Asia
(D. Dorrington; KAZ/92/4)

Media ownership, editorial freedom and a legal framework for an independent and pluralistic press in Asia
(S. M. Ali; KAZ/92/5)

Media ownership, editorial freedom and a legal framework for an independent and pluralistic broadcasting media in Asia
(E. Lopez; KAZ/92/6)

Training and organization of journalists in Asia
(V. G. Tirol and J. L. Pavia; KAZ/92/7)

Broadcasting training for human development: some lessons from the Asia-Pacific experience
(H. H. Rao; KAZ/92/8)

Attitudes to mass media in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan
(Research team in Alma Ata; KAZ/92/9)

The situation of media in Central Asia
(M. Hadlow, UNESCO Regional Adviser for Communication in Asia and the Pacific; KAZ/92/10)

Media policy in Asia—obstacles to freedom of information
(B. R. Rubin; KAZ/92/CRP.1)

Declaration of Windhoek
(KAZ/92/INF.2)

Address by Henrikas Yushkiavitshus, Assistant Director-General for Communication, Information and Informatics, UNESCO
(KAZ/92/INF.5)

Address by Rafeeuddin Ahmed, representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

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